

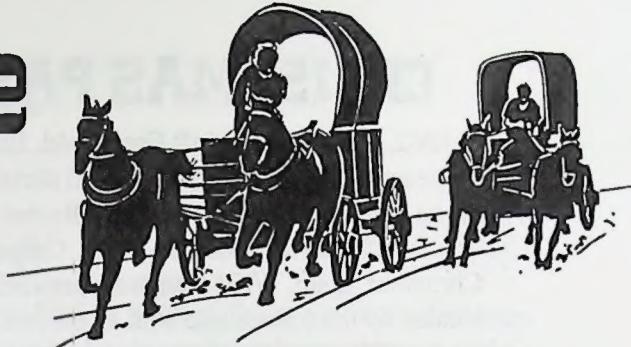
The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Where The Past Meets The Future

206 East Main, Suite C • P.O. Box 582 • Talent, Oregon 97540 • 541/512-8838

December 2001



GRANT AWARDED THS FROM TRUST MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Marian Angele, Director of the Talent Historical Society, is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant from Trust Management Services in the amount of \$2,908. The money will be used for a historic photo preservation project. As soon as the check arrives, we will purchase a digital camera, a wall-mount photo display unit, photo paper, and archival supplies.

Your help is requested in locating historic photos of Talent and the surrounding area, and the people who settled here. The photos will be unharmed, as we can come right to your home (as long as you live in the Rogue Valley!) and photograph your photo with our digital camera. Or, if you choose, you may bring your photo(s) to the THS office where we'll photograph them there.

Then we'll be able to load the photos into the computer, do any digital enhancement that may be needed, and print the photos out on photo paper. Then they are ready for our photo display unit or to be archived for future generations.

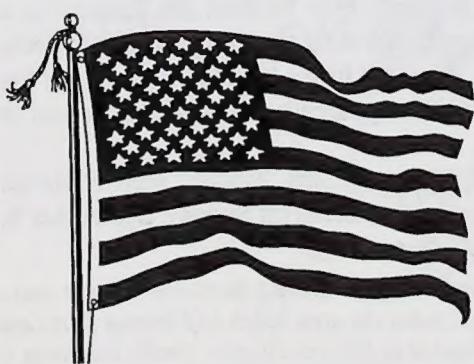
Please contact the THS office, Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., to let us know when we can copy your photos. Your help is very important to us and will be much appreciated!

THS MEMBERS ELECT DIRECTORS & BOARD REELECTS OFFICERS

On November 11, 2001, at the Annual Membership Meeting, board members reelected were: Lynn Newbry, Margaret Van Natta, Bob Casebeer, and Wanda Gibbs. Board members elected to another two-year term were: John Morrison, Helen Seiber, and Katherine Harris. New board members elected were: Alice Burnette and Joe Cowley. Directors serve for two years.

During a regular session of the THS Board held on November 27, 2001, all the incumbent officers were reelected to serve another year's term. Unanimously reelected were: Lynn Newbry, President; John Morrison, Vice President; Helen Seiber, Treasurer; Katherine Harris, Secretary.

The THS Board anticipates an active year ahead as we pursue the dream of larger facilities to house an enhanced museum. Please work with us, give us your input, volunteer an hour or a day of your time, and let us know that the Talent Historical Society is really important to you.



CHRISTMAS PAST: ONE COUPLE'S RECORD

In 1862, Enos O'Flyng left Greenfield, Illinois, for the "Land of Promise," Oregon. He kept extensive journals all his life and wrote a variety of articles during his lifetime which have been preserved. What follows is his record of how he and the woman he married, Rachel Madary "Madie" Kahler, spent various Christmas seasons.

Christmas 1862, Grande Ronde Valley, Oregon

Christmas again. What a contrast between this Christmas and the last. A year ago this morning I was at home surrounded by my friends and with all the comforts of life while now I am out in this wilderness with but few of the comforts of life and with all the friends that I hold most dear in a far country.

This day has been spent in the house and a lonesome day it has been. It has rained the whole blessed day.

[And from a letter he wrote his sister about Christmas 1862] You may bet your life we had a grand old time Christmas. It rained all day and we went to see nobody and nobody came to see us.

Christmas 1863, near Dixonville, Oregon, east of Roseburg

Enos did not record this Christmas in his journal, but he was at Martin Burt's home just east of Roseburg. His sister Abigail Temple O'Flyng was Martin Burt's wife.

Christmas 1864, La Grande, Oregon

No journal entry for December 25, but on December 22 he attended a cotillion party. At the previous dance, he remarked, "made the acquaintance of several pretty girls, there were 12 ladies and some 50 men so you can see in this the fastest fellow stands the best chance. But I cannot see but what I get along as well as any." At the Christmas cotillion mentioned above, he wrote, "I had the honor to be appointed floor manager. There were 15 ladies present and 32 numbers were taken. As well as I could judge all passed smoothly. I never before was placed in the same position, that I was that night, and as would be supposed felt a little embarrassed but that feeling soon wore off and I performed--some say--very well.

There was one incident took place, in which, I probably done wrong. It was made my duty to introduce any gentleman who was a stranger and wished a partner. A certain person who I considered was in every sense of the word a gentleman, wished to be made acquainted with some of the ladies. I presented him to one, she refused him and immediately went out on the floor with another person. It made me a little angry and I told her that it would be the last gentleman that I would introduce her to. Her wrath was aroused against me, and she said that I had better mind or I would get her opinion of me, and I guess I shall mind, for I do not suppose that her opinion would be very flattering."

Christmas, 1865 (No mention)

Christmas, 1866 (No mention)

However, Rachel Kahler, whose family lived near Tolo, in the Rogue River Valley, a woman he subsequently married, wrote Enos: "I haven't the blues now and haven't had them [recently]. I don't intend to have them anymore; if I can help it. Christmas has passed and I am still feeling cheerful and comparatively happy. I am going to try and be a better woman next year, than I have been. Perhaps you think it presumptuous to call myself a woman but I have lived long enough in the world to fill a woman's place now." [Rachel was 19 years old and was teaching school.] [In 1867, Rachel Madary Kahler was teaching at Wagner Creek School in the present Talent area.]

Christmas 1868 (Madie Kahler at Grave Creek, Oregon-now Sunny Valley)

This day is almost gone. Yesterday evening Mother, Pap and the boys came over. In the evening we lighted up the tree, looked at it a while then made some candy. The little boys had a fine play and we old [she was 20] folks talked some and sang. I had my hair curled, the first time since just a year ago, and then they rested on his shoulder. I was happy that day for a while. O my darling how we love forbidden pleasure. Poor Mother, she thinks I have forgotten that silly freak, but I'm afraid I shall not forget it soon, perhaps never. And sometimes I hardly know whether to wish I may forget or not. I sometimes think it would be better if I could forget it just for the sake of my folks. . . . We had a nice Christmas tree though. I got a new dress on it. [Madie apparently was teaching school in Sunny Valley]

Enos O'Flyng's diary for the years 1866-1869 are not known to exist. He married his "Madie," and her diaries do exist. Enos' diaries for subsequent years do exist however. The couple were married on Sunday, September 6, 1869, in Salem, Oregon, by Reverend Alvin F. Waller of the Methodist Mission.

The Kahler family has a building in Jacksonville named after them. Madie taught at Wagner Creek school. Her brother was a physician in Phoenix. The family owned a donation land claim near Tolo which included the area which had housed Fort Lane during the Rogue River Indian War. Enos O'Flyng and she married and homesteaded in Eastern Oregon, finally returning to Salem during their golden years.



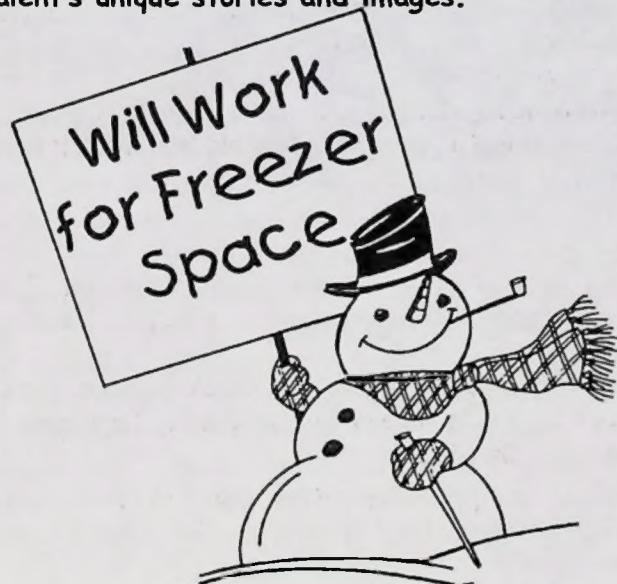
BRIC-A-BRAC

Welcome

THS welcomed some new members into the Society in the past couple of months. They are:
John Hamilton, Eva Hoffer, Barbara Haade, and Joe Cowley.



We invite you to come and join our group of great volunteers and spend a couple of hours each month with us. You may choose a specific responsibility, help develop a project, exhibit or program. Or just drop by spontaneously when you have a free moment to see if something needs to be done or to give us feedback on how we are doing. Our understanding of history thrives as we work together to collect, preserve, and display Talent's unique stories and images.



Jayme Neil, a student from Southern Oregon University, has been doing her practicum at the Talent Historical Society. She has worked a lot with Rosemary Bevel learning to accession and other things. Jayme is responsible for our exhibit of medical items. She has done a great job of putting together the exhibit.

The exhibit in the **THS** museum for November and December is medical supplies. We have an old doctor's bag, a suture kit, various medicine bottles, a bed pan, and some other things. We also have a nice display board giving a brief bio of some of the doctors who served Talent in years gone by.



The **Historacle** is published quarterly by the
 Talent Historical Society
 P.O. Box 582 / 206 E. Main Street
 Talent Community Center • Talent, Oregon 97540

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Photographers	Steve Ray/Majestic West
Newsletter Layout/ Graphic Design	Alice Ray/Majestic West

Comments & letters may be sent to the Editor, **The Historacle**, by mail or by e-mail thsmuseum@earthlink.net. Members of the Society receive **The Historacle** free with membership.

C. C. BEEKMAN, THE JACKSONVILLE BANKER

Almost every Southern Oregonian has been to Jacksonville, walked those historic streets, admired the brick buildings that were the 1860's declaration of wealth and power. At that time, as most residents are aware, Jacksonville was the county seat of Jackson County. The present museum in Jacksonville was the courthouse and the Children's Museum, was the county jail. This is a town which now claims to have 10,000 people buried in the town cemetery, a cemetery divided by religion--Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. At one time there was another section, Chinese, but those bodies were exhumed and the bones taken home to China for reburial. If a tourist walks the shady sidewalks of Jacksonville, one of the Southern Oregon Historical Society attractions is the Beekman Bank. However, few people know much about Beekman unless they stop by the Beekman House, which in the summer is a "living history" exhibit with people dressed in costume, and in some way demonstrating how the Beekmans lived.

One of the children of banker and Wells Fargo agent C. C. Beekman was Benjamin Beekman. In 1939, while living at the Portland Hotel Benjamin Beekman was interviewed by historians working for the Works Progress Administration. Benjamin had left Jacksonville at seventeen, and went to Hartford, Connecticut, to enter Yale University. He studied law and then returned to Oregon, settled in Portland and lived at his offices in the Portland Hotel. In 1939, the interviewer remarked that Benjamin had lived in the same room and used the same key to let himself into his room for forty years.

In 1939, Benjamin Beekman was 76 years old, wore pince nez glasses, and he apparently had spent his life as a bachelor. Believing, as do many of today, that young Oregonians knew very little about the history of his beloved state, he offered annual cash prizes to youth in Oregon for essays on Oregon history. This was done through the auspices of the Oregon Historical Society.

Here is what Benjamin Beekman said about his father and Jacksonville in that Works Progress Administration interview:

"My father, C. C. Beekman, came west in 1850, landing in San Francisco. His father had been a contractor and he had taught his boys the trade. He found plenty of work in San Francisco and went to work at once. He came to Jacksonville in 1852, mining for a while nearby. He made quite a bit of money and sold out and commenced buying gold, which was the start of his banking business.

Later, when the Wells-Fargo express-company put in its appearance, he was appointed agent. The stage stopped at his door where all goods and passengers had to be loaded, so he worked under an advantage so far as robbers were concerned. No one knew when he was going to make a shipment of gold. Another thing to his advantage was that he never shipped gold in the iron-bound express box. When bandits hold up the stage, it was customary for them to ask for the registered mail and the express box. My father would take an ordinary candle box, put in fifteen hundred or three thousand dollars' worth of gold, and fill up the remaining space with paper, straw, or excelsior, so that the weight of the loaded box was about equal to what it would be if it were loaded with candles. This he would ship, confident in the knowledge that no highwayman would rummage around among the baggage, looking for gold in an old tallow box.

The only time there was any danger of a holdup was along in 1910 when the Pinkerton agency, under whose protection he had placed his bank, unearthed a plot in Portland to rob the bank. Officers stayed around across the street for several days with pistols and rifles, waiting for the would-be holdups to arrive, but they must have got wind the bank was being watched, for none of them ever came.

If you go into a newspaper office or pick up the usual history book, you will find that the usual reason for the railroad's passing through Medford instead of through Jacksonville is that the citizens of Jacksonville failed to gather in a bonus required by the railroad; but this is not true at all. The railroad made two surveys, one passing through the present site of Medford (which was not in existence then), and another that passed within two and a half miles of Jacksonville. Medford is five miles distant. The present route is the longer, while the other ran along the base of the foothills, it all depended on Ashland. If the closer survey more adhered to, the line would wind up into the hills above Ashland; otherwise, on the flats below. It so happened that Ashland was placed in a strategic position to be a division point of the railroad, and this determined the survey as the one in present use. The other would not have permitted the building of roundhouses, workshops, and necessary appurtenances of a railroad division. Considering these things the citizens of Jacksonville saw it was useless to raise the money required, for the difference in a distance of two-and-a-half miles from town to the railroad, and the present distance of five miles was not enough to get fractious about. Either would have spelled doom to the town of Jacksonville, either by creating a new town (viz. Medford), or by moving the business district of the old, two-and-a-half miles to the railroad. This is the real reason why the railroad now runs through Medford instead of [through Jacksonville?]"

And as one well-known radio columnist has said many, many times, "Now you know the rest of the story!"

EARLY OREGON POLITICAL LAWS

LIBERATED WOMEN

Oregon became a state on February 14, 1859, and on September 2, 1859 the newly formed state legislature passed an extraordinary property rights bill for women, making it the law of the new state. Prior to the passage of this legislation, a husband could claim all rights to property. The new legislation provide women in Oregon with the right to make a legal "declaration of the real and personal property" they wanted to be their own property, separate from their husbands.

There were women who filed for such property even before the bill was enacted into law. In August of 1859, a Lucy Ann Musick, one month before the legislature acted, laid legal claim to "10 cows branded with the letter N, one American mare, one Durham bull, and one orchard of fruit trees." She pointed out in her claim that these items were her property before her marriage and not that of her husband.

A Mary Wade, also a claimant, said she had inherited \$600 from the estate of her father and wanted that "separate property free from all debts and obligations contracted by my husband."

Sarah A. Coats declared that when she had married her husband in 1869, she owned six full-grown sheep, "five of them being ewes for the reasonable value of \$5 a piece, or \$30 in all." She declared that her husband insisted she give him custody and control of the sheep. Her petition stated that she had earned \$50 by her own labor by washing clothes for others, but her husband claimed the money. She wanted control of both the sheep and the return of the \$50 plus interest. In her petition Coats pointed out specifically that the money she made by washing clothes was done for people "other than her husband or family."

Mary A. Canan filed a declaration in 1879 for these items: "furniture, dishes, tableware, cookstove, 18 cords of wood, a half-barrel of vinegar, 525 pounds of flour, 148 pounds of sugar, and an unspecified amount of dried peaches." Her document claimed she had acquired the property through her own personal labor and not that of her husband.

Ann Short declared she owned "three mares, four cows, 400 sheep (more or less), one wagon, assorted farming tools plus about 700 acres of land," and claimed the land, the livestock and the farming equipment for herself.

Consider this legal document filed in 12 May 1876 in Roseburg by Susan Farrell:

"SUSAN FARRELL, a married woman being the wife of Thos. H. Farrell do hereby declare it to be my intention to hold the following property as my separate property the same being owned by me in my own right before marriage and described as follows: two horses, 7 mares and 2 colts, five milk cows, 2 yearling calves, one heifer, one steer, 2 calves. Also, one wagon and harness. A note from Mark Siderman for five hundred dollars and one note from F. O. Worley for fifty dollars. Twenty five head of hogs. Dower in three lots and three houses in Canyonville, dower in two farms, one known as the 'Worley Farms' and the other as 'Addison Chapman Farms' situated on the banks of the Umpqua River, Douglas County, Oregon.

Signed: Susan Farrell, 12 May 1866

Wits: Wm. R. Willis & Thomas P. Sheridan

Recorded: 14 May 1866, E. A. Lathrop, Recorder"

Susan was not through pointing out what was her separate property for on 20 April 1867, nearly a year later, she also legally claimed the following items in a similar legal deposition: "I hereby declare my intention of holding the following described property separate and apart from my said husband and in my own right only as the said property is exclusively my own: one stallion valued at \$300, one yearling black colt valued at \$20, one horse, eight years old, branded 'J.P.' on hip and shoulder formerly belonging to F. G. Dubell valued at \$100, one spotted calf; one this spring's colt formerly belonging to F. Worley valued at \$30."

And apparently none of these liberated ladies sought any matrimonial separation from their husbands. Women in Oregon were liberated early in the State's existence, and Oregon women obviously liked and used the law regarding separate property.

JANUARY DANCE, GRANDE RONDE, OREGON 1863

{OR MORE OF THE LIFE OF ENOS O'FLYNG}

Note: The following is an excerpt from a letter sent by Enos O'Flyng to his sister Orcy who lived in Greenfield, Illinois, was dated January 12, 1863. Enos ultimately married Rachel Kahler, the daughter of William and Georgiana (Johnson) Kahler, pioneer settlers in the Rogue River Valley who arrived in the winter of 1852, and whose donation land claim included Old Fort Lane. The excerpt is printed just as Enos wrote it. It may be fascinating to note that Enos became a school teacher as did his wife Rachel...especially when you observe the spelling and syntax. Enos kept a daily diary as did his wife for a number of years. Prior to this time the O'Flyng material has only appeared in a privately published book for the O'Flyng family.

You may bet we had a grand old time Christmas. It rained all day and we went to see nobody and nobody came to see us. New Years it was the same. Dock went to a ball New Years eave but I gess he wasent very well repaid as he did not know any body, nor niether did he get any thing extry to eat. A week after new years there was a nother shindig with in a quarter [mile] of our cabbin. The Lady of the hous (who has two husbands in the valley) - in vitged me to come up so I borrowed elbet Keebler's (our third parners) pants and vest and after drawing on a par of number ten boots, I thought I could cut quit a dash among the ladies. True my pants was large a nough for two pare, my vest resembled a young round a bout and if my boots were cowhide and number ten they did not have but one potatoe in them. And after all I felt shure that I could gain attentan in some way.

When I got there the little cabbin was crowded to over flow. I elbowed my way through the crowd and gained the ladies side, who were all seeted in a row. the men stanidn around stereing at them like they had never seen the anamules before. There were a bout sixty men and some eight or ten women--old women, young women, old mads and children made up the motley crew. The walls of the cabbin was hung around with sheets with showy quilt patterns pined on them. The dance commenced, the men and women came down with a double shuffle in regular darkey stile. The dance stoped.

A table was brought out, pies and cak wer displate. Ah, you may be shure they looked temptting. They made my mough farely water to loock at them (You must know that I have scarceley tasted a danty of any cind since I left home).

They had just commenced passing them aroun when a general charge was made upon the table and pies and cakes disapeared in the twinkel of an eye. I got one small piece. Some of them got drunk, revolvers wer drawn but they was soon quelled. I found the ladies wasent perticular smitten with me. I could get nothing to each so bundled up and marched fer home vowing that the fare sex of Grand round with its balls might do without me ever after.

*Enos O'Flyng is a brother of Abigail Temple O'Flyng Burt, Historacle editor
Bob Casebeer's great, great grandmother.*

JACKSON COUNTY PLACENAMES HENRY MOUNTAIN

East of Ashland on the Dead Indian Plateau lies Henry Mountain. The mountain was named after the Henry family who homesteaded that area after the first Henry of that family emigrated to the United States from Germany in the 1860s. That emigrant's grandson, Harry Merle Henry of Phoenix, age 77, passed away November 5, 2001. The pioneer Henry family is extensive. Mr. Henry had two sons, three stepsons, three step daughters, a sister, a wife, 18 grand children and one great grandchild. Indeed he leaves a legacy of memory in our joint community.



OREGON TRAIL---JUST A FEW RANDOM FACTS CONTINUED

The Oregon Trail has been immortalized in Oregon's state song, depicted in hundreds of shoot-em-up Western films, described by historians and sociologists, and now has become the focus of attention by thousands of tourists annually who flock to a scores of interpretive centers and historical monuments that now mark the trail's courses (for there were more ways west on the Oregon Trail than one!) from Missouri to Oregon--a distance of some 2000 miles. Just for fun, here are some facts about the Trail followed by those pioneers who settled the Rogue River valley and other valleys in Oregon.

Were any white wagon train emigrants ever massacred by Indians?

Researchers have identified only four pre-Civil War massacres which can be historically attributed to Indians. These were the Bloody Point massacre in 1852 at Tule Lake on the Applegate Trail, the Ward Party massacre near Fort Boise on Idaho's Snake river in 1854, the Holloway Party massacre on the Humboldt River in 1857, and the Otter-Van Orman Party massacre near Salmon Falls on the Snake River in 1860. The "massacre" myth is attributed to the writers of Western fiction and film primarily.

How about Indian attacks in general?

Various tribes on the east side of the Rockies along the Platte and Sweetwater Rivers did pose a threat. Prior to 1860, using 66 diaries, researchers found that there were nine eyewitness accounts and four secondhand reports of Indian attacks or the immediate results of such attacks. Possible attack threats that did not occur were described in eight diaries. The overwhelming majority of emigrants encountered no apparent threat of attack while passing through present Nebraska and Wyoming.

What prompted the Indians to attack?

Most attacks seem to have been motivated by the hope of plunder. Several diarists mention unsuccessful attempts at theft. About one of every three parties on the Trail were likely to receive a visit by a raiding party, which may or may not have attempted to commit violence.

What was the most dangerous part of the Trail involving Indian attacks?

Ninety percent of the emigrants killed by Indians were killed west of the South Pass, mostly along the Snake and Humboldt Rivers or on the Applegate Trail to the southern end of the Willamette Valley. The section from Tule Lake to Canyonville on the Applegate Trail was particularly dangerous.

What were the most frequently used animals to pull the wagons?

Oxen, a full grown bull that has been neutered, pulled approximately one-half of all the wagons which moved west. The other half were drawn by mules or horses. As time went on and information about the hardships on the Trail filtered back East, about two-thirds of all the wagons in a train used oxen. One yoke of oxen (two animals) would cost from a low of \$25 to a high of \$65 during the last half of the 1840s.

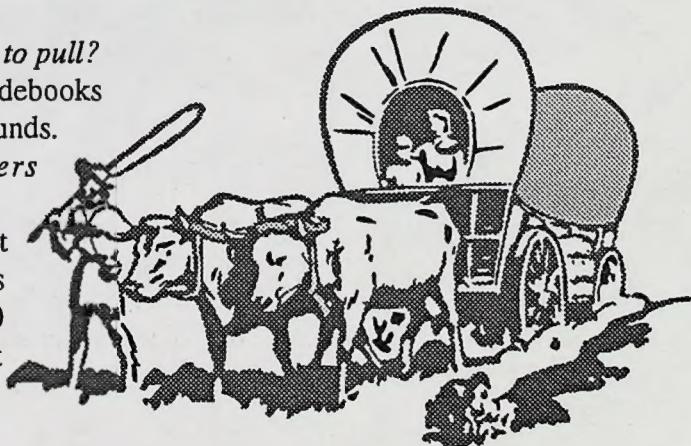
What kind of a load did the draft animals have to pull?

The recommendations in the published emigrant guidebooks indicate that a wagon load varied from 1,600 to 2,500 pounds.

How much food did the guidebook writers recommend?

Generally, it was recommended that each emigrant (not each family, each emigrant, be supplied with 200 pounds of flour, 150 pounds of bacon, 10 pounds of coffee, 20 pounds of sugar, and 10 pounds of salt. If an emigrant had a large family, he might need more than one wagon just for the food supplies.

The rest of these fascinating facts will appear in the next issue.



WE DID BRING BACK THE BUFFALO

Every shoot-em-up Western that deals with wagons going across the Plains seems to have a buffalo scene, hunting them, watching them stampede, etc. The journals from those who actually crossed the Plains spend much time talking about the first buffalo they saw, and then about the buffalo chips they used for fuel, and the problems of getting pure water. Millions of buffalo got a lot of water polluted.

However, in 1901 only 500 buffalo remained in all North America, according to the scholars. The estimates are that 50 million had been slaughtered as the U. S. Army sought to drive the Plains tribes onto reservations by the simple expedient of depriving them of the buffalo they needed for survival--bedding, clothing, teepee hides, armor, ornament, fuel, food, etc. Indeed the buffalo was the main source of sustenance for most of the Plains tribes.

Several decades ago ranchers began to build up the buffalo population. By 1972 some 30,000 buffalo were raised by ranchers and some Indian tribal groups. Today about 250,000 roam reservations, ranches, and state and Federal parks from Oregon to Wisconsin to the Southwest. And

that does not count the remaining herds of wild ones in the northern reaches of Saskatchewan and Alberta--the timber buffalo.

Today they are a tourist attraction. Twenty years ago, you could view buffalo nibbling on the grass just south of the Tolo I-5 exit off Highway 99. Now Denver is thinking about stationing a herd just outside the new Denver airport (which is miles out of town). The Fort Belknap Indian community sells permission to about a dozen hunters a year to shoot some of the ones they raise--price \$2000 for a medium-size buffalo, and \$4000 for a trophy head. Ted Turner, the Georgia billionaire who founded CNN, is a bison rancher and owns 1.5 million acres in four states, and just added 34,186 more acres in the Nebraska Sandhills.

The wildest buffalo scheme of all is that of Dan O'Brien and his ranching partner Sam Hurst, who want to turn both Dakotas into a giant buffalo preserve: no more cattle, no more farming, just bison and tourists and no fences for either. This idea is probably doomed to oblivion, but the buffalo are back...and so are buffalo steak and burgers. For years travelers on I-5 could order theirs at a restaurant in Josephine County's Wolf Creek.



NAMES ON THE LAND

Ever wonder what the Native Americans who lived in the Rogue Valley, the Takelma, called some of the more outstanding features of the valley? If so, here are a few that will partially satisfy your curiosity.

Table Rock---Di'tani

Rock Point (west of Gold Hill)---Titankah

Jacksonville---Dilomi

Ashland---Lat-gau

Wagner Creek---Lats'upkh

Willow Springs (Central Point)---Hayawkh

Bear Creek---Si-ku-ptat (supposed to mean "dirty water.")

Any resident of Talent who can pronounce the Takelma name for Wagner Creek without others thinking that the person is in the process of up-chucking is entitled to respect.

DOWNSTREAM CALENDAR

"If we forget where we came from, we will never get to where we are going!"

Talent Historical Society Museum,

Talent Community Center.

Museum open hours:

Mon.—Sat. 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

No board meeting in December.

December 13, Thursday, 10:00 a.m.

Camp White Historical Society

JCHMA meeting.

December 25, Tuesday

Merry Christmas!

January 1, 2002

Happy New Year!

January 10, 2002, Thursday, 10:00 a.m.

Eagle Point Historical Society

JCHMA meeting.

January 22, 2002, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.

Talent Library.

Board meeting of the Talent Historical Society directors. Members and general public invited to attend.

February 26, 2002, Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

Talent Library.

Board meeting of the Talent Historical Society directors. Members and general public invited to attend.

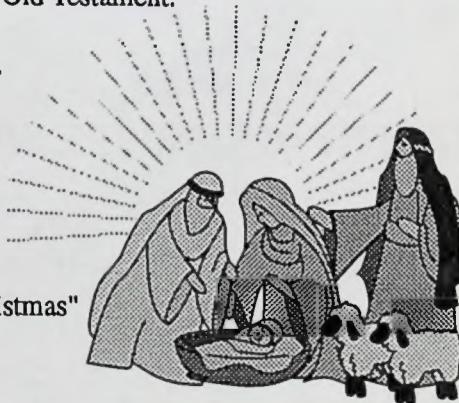


ORIGIN OF THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

From 1558 until 1829 people in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. During this era someone wrote 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' as a kind of secret catechism that could be sung in public without risk of persecution. The song has two levels of interpretation: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the church. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality.

1. The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ.
2. The two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments.
3. Three French hens stand for faith, hope and love.
4. The four calling birds are the four Gospels.
5. The five gold rings recall the torah (Law) the first five books of the Old Testament.
6. The six geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation.
7. Seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit.
8. The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes.
9. Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the spirit (Gal.5).
10. The ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments.
11. Eleven pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples.
12. Twelve drummers drumming symbolize the 12 points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

There you have it, the HIDDEN meaning of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and the secret behind the song. (RRamon)



Continued from page 10

Over time, the 25th of December has come to commemorate the birth of the Christ child, even though Christian historians are convinced Jesus was not born in December (this has something to do with when shepherds go to the fields to watch over their sheep in Israel). Scores of other Christmasy things have been added to the celebration over the years, Santa Claus, Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer (in our lifetime—he was the focus of a Gene Autry song!), and scores of other practices—decorated trees, lights, Christmas cards, yule logs, egg nogs, candy, bread, gifts and lots of red and green, etc., that today mark the Christmas celebrations in the Americas. In lots of ways, commercially at least, where Christmas starts before Thanksgiving, Saturnalia is still with us, even though many Americans sing carols, pray earnestly, and churches across the world marked by Western civilization celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25—as most Americans will do, even as will the members of the Talent Historical Society.

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL

CHRISTMAS: A WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

As the days shorten, and night falls ever more quickly, the shortest day in the year marks the arrival of the winter solstice, which falls on December 21. From a historical viewpoint, almost every culture on earth has created religious rites that focus on this natural event. In

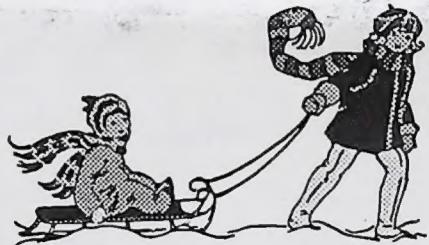
Western cultures, some 2600 years ago, the Romans marked the shortest day of the year with a holiday called the Saturnalia. It began on the 18th and

was marked by solemn rites which culminated on the 21st, rites indicating the fear that the sun was going out, and then on the 22nd, when it was obvious to the priesthood that the sun was coming back, Saturnalia exploded into celebration: slaves were released from their duties for three days, feasting occurred, lavish presents were given, and it was party time. The sacred colors of the god Saturn? Green and Red. Yup, Christmas colors! Years passed. The events depicted in the Christian gospels occurred and Christianity became a major but underground religion in the Roman Empire.

Several Roman emperors are said to have fostered Mithraism, primarily because it was a favorite of the Roman army. Some scholars say that one emperor named Heliogabalus (218-22 A. D.) declared Mithra to be the chief Roman God in the 3rd century. Perplexed by what he considered the pagan rites of Saturn, he sought to end the age-old celebration. Convinced by his political advisors that such an act would be deeply resented, he acted upon their suggestion to add a day to Saturnalia and dedicate it to Mithra, that day would be the 25th of December. No complaint: the Roman legions worshipped Mithra!

When the Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the Roman Empire state religion in 313 A. D., he was confronted with the same dilemma--the celebration of a widely enjoyed pagan holiday eight days in length that focused on drinking, gift-giving and nationwide party time. His advisors, pointing out that Mithra had only been a part of the Saturnalia for less than 75 years, suggested that he name the added 25th as a day where a Christian mass was to be held to replace the rites for Mithra. He agreed that that was a politically bright move, and so Christmas, as a holiday, was begun.

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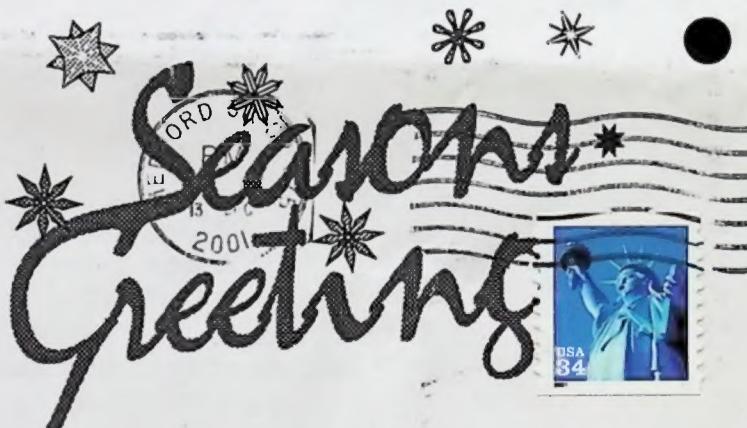


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